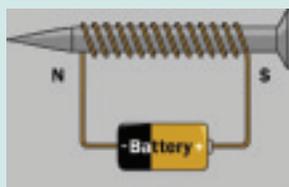


## An Impatient Scientist's Needs

By Lt. Jason Yauman,  
VAW-117

As a child, I was fascinated by how things worked. That's probably why my parents always kept a close eye on me. One day, however, I managed to escape their attention. I was in middle school at the time, and we were learning about electromagnets. The teacher had showed us how we could make one by wrapping copper wire



## One Way to Ruin a Moving Experience

By AT2 Robert Phillips,  
VAW-117

My wife and I were excited about moving into a revamped townhouse aboard NAS Pt. Mugu. Everything about our new quarters was nice until one day we smelled smoke after plugging in our electrical equipment upstairs. Inspection revealed the smoke was coming from our TV and VCR.

I unplugged both items. Then, thinking the first incident may have been an isolated case, I moved to my son's room, where I plugged in his desk. I was putting away his toys when my wife ran in, telling me his desk was on fire. As I unplugged the desk, I could see it burning slowly. *[He would have reduced the risk of shock if he had turned off the circuit breaker*



around an iron nail. Because I had a whole spool of telephone wire that was solid copper, I decided to make my own.

In assembling the materials for my little contraption, I decided to build a switch into the system. I used a piece of metal from a coffee can to bridge two nails that would be connected between a battery and the magnet. The hard part was finding a suitable battery. I checked the flashlights in the house to no avail, and I couldn't find any batteries in the junk drawer, either.

At that point, I decided to plug my contraption into the wall outlet. "After all, I have a switch in place," I thought. Bear in mind that I had no working knowledge of current or voltage at the time. It just seemed like a good idea to me. I did have the sense to use a screwdriver with a plastic handle to close the circuit after I had plugged the bare leads into the wall outlet.

Needless to say, smoke billowed from my ill-conceived device. The switch idea was a brilliant one, except that the current drawn through the wire welded the circuit closed, and I had to knock the wires from the wall outlet with the now flailing screwdriver. Luckily, I had two hours to vent the basement before my parents came home.

The good news from this experience was that I gained a much needed respect for electricity—without getting shocked, I might add. I also learned that creative children can be dangerous. Don't stifle ingenuity; just make sure it's supervised by someone who can get to a car and go buy batteries when an impatient scientist needs them. ✘

*before he unplugged the desk.—Ed.]*

I had my wife and son go downstairs while I made a trouble call. With it being a weekend, my call was transferred to the OOD. I explained that I felt my situation was an emergency because I didn't know the extent of the problem. However, he informed me he had no one qualified to handle it and said I should call back on a weekday.

I called back first thing Monday morning and was promised someone would come check my electrical problems. It was late afternoon and several phone calls later, though, before a technician finally showed up to check the problem (I thought). As it turned out, he just made sure I had shut off the circuit breaker, then left.

The next day, a man came out and fixed my wall outlets. He found they had been wired wrong, which was causing an over-voltage.

I had thoroughly inspected the house before signing for it, but I hadn't checked all the wall receptacles. Thankfully, I had known where the circuit-breaker panel was, which allowed me to secure power when the emergency arose. It pays to be on guard, whether you're at work or home. ✘

## In a Hurry to Get the Job Done

By AT3 Adam Harr,  
VAW-117

Overconfidence causes problems. I know because I learned the hard way during my senior year of high school. I was working for a printing company as

part of a cooperative educational program and had become confident in my abilities as an offset pressman and service technician.

One night, I was running a set of business cards that already were overdue, and the boss was pressuring me to finish them. The job was a complex, four-color procedure. I already had set two of the colors and was preparing the final two.

Certain of my abilities, I steadily turned up the speed of the press until it was running wide open. I kept one eye on the finished product and the other



on the press head, in case it jammed. I suddenly noticed that a brass bushing on the head had worked loose, and, without thinking, I reached across the press to slide the bushing back into place.

Unfortunately, my ring finger dropped a little too close to the press head, allowing it to grab my finger. I instantly jerked away my hand, turned off the power, grabbed a rag, and headed to the office, where I told the boss what had happened. I escaped with only a crushed fingertip, a small price to pay, considering I could have lost my finger or my whole hand.

That incident taught me to respect machinery because it has no respect for you. My respect for machinery has grown during my time in the Navy, where I'm exposed to numerous hazards in the everyday work environment. I know it's better to ask a shipmate to give you a hand or to ask your supervisor for more help than to rush to get a job done. I don't ever want to repeat the lesson I learned in a civilian workplace. 

## My Foot Was on the Cutting Edge

Author Unknown

About 20 years ago, a guy I worked with ran over his foot with a lawnmower. Fortunately, he was wearing steel-toed boots, and they saved his foot. I remember thinking, "What kind of idiot runs over his foot with a lawnmower?"

Well, I found out while mowing my backyard. I was pulling the lawnmower toward me when I tripped over a piece of wood. I've always heard things like this happen in slow motion, but that wasn't the case with me. Before I knew what was happening, I was on the ground, and the lawnmower was on my foot. The resistance was enough to kill the mower's engine.

As I pulled my foot from under the mower, I expected to find a bloody mess. The only visible damage initially, though, was to my boot: The steel toe was missing, and the leather was chewed up. I took off the boot to find a black-and-blue toe, but that was all. Thanks to the steel-toed boots I



had worn while trimming some large branches on a tree, my day was saved.

I couldn't help thinking about all the times I had mowed the lawn in tennis shoes or sandals. Only luck and a bit of providence had saved me from a tragedy. I finally looked for the steel cap from the boot and found it under the mower. The cap was split up the front—just like my toe could have been.

The next time you're mowing a lawn, think about the hazards involved and wear the prescribed safety equipment. 